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ANGLO-FRENCH RIVALRY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

ITS HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY AND DIPLOMATIC CLIMATE

John L. Christian

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AN apposite instance of the interdependence of geography and history is provided by the tense rivalry between Great Britain and France in Southeast Asia before 1910. This rivalry, which was essentially a problem in the historical geography and diplomatic climate of the times, had its origin in the astonishingly persistent belief that somewhere between the Bay of Bengal and the South China Sea would be found a short route to the wealth and trade of interior China, particularly Yunnan and Szechwan.

Contemporaries regarded it as axiomatic that a Sino-French or Siamese-French war over French aggressions in Indochina would result in an Anglo-French war. Indeed, twice (in 1893 and 1896) the two countries were on the verge of battle for control of the Menam and Mekong routes to Yunnan. But geography and malaria were against the diplomats. These routes never have come into use; and the area where Burma, French Indochina, and Thailand now march in a common frontier is today one of the least-known regions of all Asia.

Largely because of the existence of close ties between the two countries since the maturing of the Entente Cordiale of 1904, it is easy to forget that they were in acrimonious rivalry in Southeast Asia for decades, particularly from 1862 to 1904, when Britain kept careful watch over French activities from Oman and Afghanistan in the Middle East to New Caledonia and the New Hebrides in the South Seas. In this instance certain historicogeographical aspects of the problem are basically more important than the usual facets of diplomacy and politics.

Beginnings of French and British Interests

Historically, French interest in the lands east of Suez began with the organization of the French East India Company, in 1604, the dispatch of the first French ships to the Orient, in 1611, and the beginnings of the French Oriental establishments, in the middle of the century. As early as 1631 the French regarded Madagascar as of particular value because of its favorable location for extending their trade to Southeast Asia.[1] By 1663 French priests were acquainted with coastal Burma, Siam, and Cambodia and in that year made their first crossing of the Malay Peninsula, near modern Tenasserim, while

[1] The Cambridge History of India, Vol. 5, British India, 1497–1858, edited by H. H. Dodwell. London, 1929, p. 62.

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en route to Siam.[2] Shortly thereafter the French, hard pressed on the mainland of India, proposed that their headquarters be moved to the Pegu coast. The French naval expedition of six ships that reached the Bay of Bengal in 1690 had as its object the establishment of commerce with Burma and Siam. In fact, the failure of the trade of the British East India Company in Burma and Siam in the seventeenth century was traced to the superiority of French influence in those states.[3]

In the eighteenth century Dupleix was interested in Burma and Siam because of the abundance there of teakwood for shipbuilding, and he suggested to his superiors that they acquire a portion of the Burmese coast.[4] During Burma's internal strife that resulted in the establishment of the Alaungpaya dynasty in 1755, the French made the mistake of aiding the defeated Talaings, while the British aided the conquerors. As a result, Alaungpaya acquired a supply of French arms, including 1300 muskets and forty 24-pounders, together with 200 French gunners, with which Burma became the premier state in Southeast Asia. The French, meantime, evened the score by inciting the Burmese to destroy the British colony on Negrais Island.[5]

In the nineteenth century Britain sent to the native states of Southeast Asia numerous embassies that had as their primary or secondary purpose inquiry into the extent of French influence in these states. For example, the missions to Burma of Symes in 1795 and 1802 and of Canning in 1803 and 1809; that of Crawfurd in 1822 to Siam and in 1826 to Burma; that of Finlayson in 1821 and Crawfurd in 1830 to Cochinchina; and those of Captain Burney, Sir James Brooke, and Sir John Bowring to Siam in the first half of the century were all interested in British trade and French ambition.

The Indochinese Peninsula

Ever since the early merchant adventurers were forced to pass through the Strait of Malacca or the Sunda Strait to reach the China coast the great Indochinese peninsula has been of interest to Europeans, principally as an obstacle to a direct route to the Far East, as that term is generally understood. In the past century it became common knowledge among Europeans in the Orient that at one point, far above the head of navigation, the Yangtze flows within 600 miles of the northern reaches of the Bay of Bengal, whereas it is some 4300 miles by sea from Calcutta to Shanghai. It was only natural that

[2] Adrien Launay: Histoire générale de la Société des Missions-Étrangères, 3 vols., Paris, 1894; reference in Vol. 1, p. 74.

[3] D. G. E. Hall: Early English Intercourse with Burma (Rangoon Univ. Publs., No. 1), London, 1928, pp. 138–153.

[4] V. McL. Thompson: Dupleix and His Letters, New York, 1933, p. 721; and Alfred Martineau: Dupleix et l'Inde française, 1740–1754, Paris, 1927, p. 451.

[5] D. G. E. Hall: The Tragedy of Negrais, *Journ. Burma Research Soc.*, Vol. 21, 1931, pp. 1–133.

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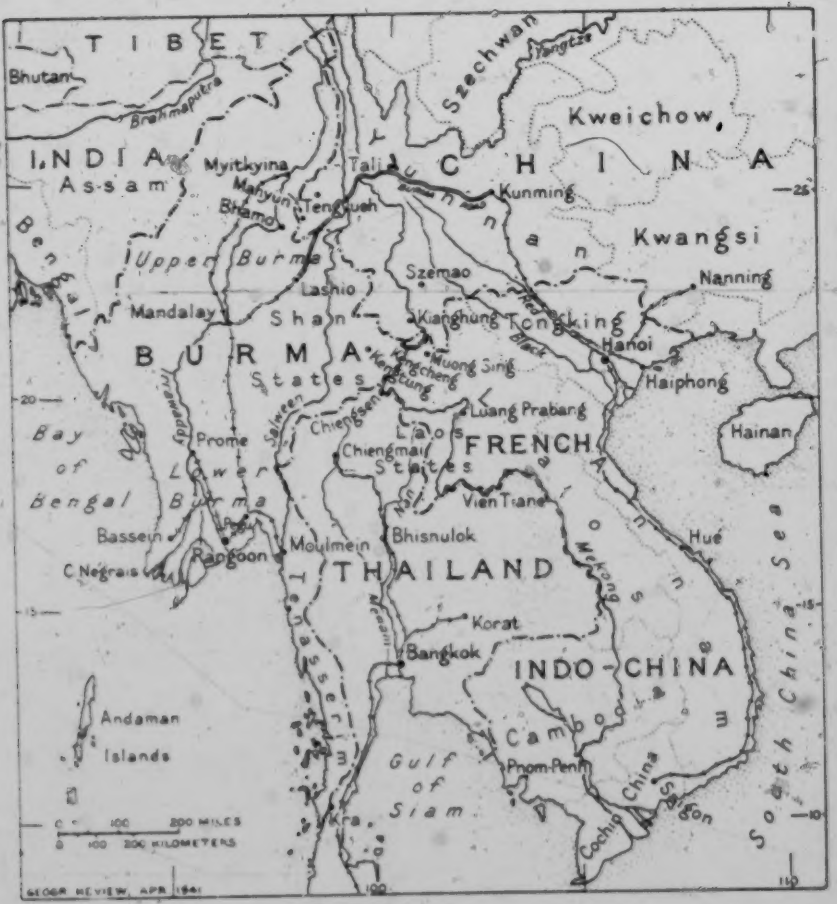

FIG. 1

early cartographers and pioneers of commerce should assume that the most direct route to interior China would be along one of the great meridional rivers of the Indochinese peninsula to the Yangtze.[6] At one point, somewhat north of the present Burma Road, the Yangtze, Mekong, and Salween are compressed within a distance of 48 miles (separated by ridges reaching up to 8000 feet above the floor of the adjacent valley).[7] But the Irrawaddy, contrary to early beliefs, does not rise on the Tibetan plateau as do the other great meridional rivers[8]

[6] Bruno Hassenstein: Some Contributions to the Geographical and Cartographical Literature of the Indo-Chinese Frontier Territories, n. p., n. d., gives a useful list of the principal sources on the area before 1900. Reports of early British attempts to penetrate India's northeastern frontier are summarized in "Selections of Papers regarding the Hill Tracts between Assam and Burmah," 10 vols., Calcutta, 1873.

[7] For a photographic report see J. F. Rock: Through the Great River Trenches of Asia. *Natl. Geogr. Mag.*, Vol. 50, 1926, pp. 133–186.

[8] A fact first noted in Sir Henry Yule: A Narrative of the Mission Sent by the Governor-General of India to the Court of Ava in 1855. London, 1858, p. 272.

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and thus occupies a unique place among the rivers of Southeast Asia, as Professor L. Dudley Stamp has recently pointed out.[9]

Geographical and historical knowledge of the area within 300 miles of the point where the frontiers of Thailand, French Indochina, and Burma now meet was extremely sketchy until the beginning of the present century. For example, Dupuis, in his study of Tongking in 1872, prepared a map that showed the Burmese possessions reaching to the Black River, within 200 miles of Hanoi, into territory concerning which King Mindon and his successor, Theebaw, had only the slightest knowledge and no jurisdiction.[10] Dupuis was perhaps willing to show extensive Burmese territory in the hope that France would inherit Mindon's holdings; but the map was later to plague the French, who, after the British annexation of Burma, in 1886, found it to their advantage to maintain that Burma had at no time extended even to the Mekong.

Garnier's Expedition

In 1858 France seized Saigon; in 1862 the Court of Hué signed a treaty that surrendered Cochinchina to France; and in 1867 Siam was forced to recognize the French as overlords of Cambodia. As a result of the treaty with Annam, Francis Garnier was appointed Inspector of Native Affairs in the new protectorate, with permission to travel on the Mekong. On June 5, 1866, the De Lagree–Garnier expedition left Saigon in the first organized European exploration of the hinterland of Indochina from the China side.[11] On April 29, 1867, the party reached Luang Prabang, a place seldom visited by Europeans since the Dutch trader Gerard van Wusthof arrived there in 1641.[12] By June the party had reached the point where Burma, Thailand, and French Indochina now meet. Garnier noted there the sale of British cotton goods in the bazaar of Kiang Sen; and De Lagree reported that tribes on the left bank of the Mekong were loyal to Siam. Both explorers observed the presence of Burmese agents with authority at the principal crossings of the Mekong. On August 23, 1867, De Lagree visited Keng Tung, in what was undoubtedly Burmese territory; and thereafter the British in Lower Burma were ever watchful of French designs on territory bordering the upper Mekong. The Frenchmen passed on to Kiang Hung town, which has been under Chinese sovereignty since the Sino-British boundary settlements and

[9] The Irrawaddy River, *Geogr. Journ.*, Vol. 95, 1940, pp. 329–356 (see note elsewhere in this number of the *Geographical Review*).

[10] J. Dupuis: L'ouverture du Fleuve Rouge au commerce et les événements du Tong-Kin, 1872–73. Paris, 1879.

[11] Hugh Clifford: Further India, London, 1904, pp. 129–254, gives a vivid account of the Garnier expedition. The basic source is Francis Garnier: Voyage d'exploration en Indo-Chine effectué pendant les années 1866, 1867 et 1868 . . . ; 2 vols. and atlas, Paris, 1873.

[12] Garnier seems to have been the first to make readily available a translation of Van Wusthof's diary. The translation, which was made for Garnier by M. P. Veitkel, was printed, with Garnier's annotations, in the *Bulletin de la Société de Géographie*, Ser. 6, Vol. 2, 1871, pp. 249–269.

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treaties of 1894 and 1897, where they noted that both Burma and China had agents in the court. On March 2, 1868, the party left the Mekong, and they reached Talifu by a journey that took them directly across the route followed by British and Burmese trade to interior Yunnan. The Moslem Sultan of Tali ordered the Garnier party away from his territory. Garnier explained the action: The Sultan has mistaken us for Englishmen. After the death of De Lagree in Yunnan young Garnier took the party out by way of Hankow, whence they traveled on to Shanghai by the American steamer *Plymouth Rock*. The Garnier expedition touched the Mekong at no point above Kiang Hung, a city to which the Britisher Captain McLeod had preceded them by thirty years. McLeod made his remarkable journey from Moulmein to Kiang Hung with six elephants and was the first European to penetrate China by the Salween route for purposes of examining trade routes.

When once it had been reported[13] that Garnier intended to "strike the Irrawaddy at Bhamo" and that he was expected also at Keng Tung and Mandalay, British interest in French activities in Southeast Asia was keen. Major General Albert Fytche, Chief Commissioner of British Burma, proceeded to Mandalay and secured Mindon's signature to a treaty that compromised Burma's independence.[14] Extraterritoriality was secured (abandoned in 1879). British agents were permitted to sit in Burmese customhouses; and Burma's power to control commerce across her territory to China was further restricted. A Resident was authorized for Mandalay, and the Irrawaddy was opened for navigation by British steamers. Captain Strover was stationed as agent in Bhamo and traveled up in November, 1868, by the first British steamer to reach that river port 40 miles from the Chinese frontier.[15] He was not, however, provided with a gunboat, as had at first been suggested; nor did Britain assume control of Burma's foreign relations, as her officers in British Burma had urged.[16]

The Sladen and Browne Expeditions

After much patient work, General Fytche in 1868 obtained permission from the King of Burma and authorization from the government of India for the dispatch of an expedition from Bhamo to Tali. Colonel E. B. Sladen, Political Agent at Mandalay, set out[17] with a group of six Europeans and a guard of 50 sepoys toward the same

[13] The London *Times*, June 7, 1868.

[14] Albert Fytche: Burma, Past and Present, 2 vols. (in 1), London, 1878. See the Anglo-Burmese treaty of Oct. 25, 1867, in *British and Foreign State Papers, 1870–71*, pp. 61 and 1305–1308.

[15] J. G. Scott, assisted by J. P. Hardiman: Gazetteer of Upper Burma and the Shan States, 2 parts in 5 vols., Rangoon, 1900–1901; reference in Part I, Vol. 1, p. 64.

[16] Alexander Bowers: Bhamo Expedition: A Report on the Practicability of Re-opening the Trade Route between Burma and Western China, Rangoon, 1869, p. 100.

[17] The official account is E. B. Sladen: Narrative of the Expedition to Explore the Trade Routes to China via Bhamo, Rangoon, 1869.

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goal as the Garnier party that had left Saigon two years before. The Sladen party reached Momein (modern Tengyueh) in September, 1868, three months after Garnier's return to Saigon. Colonel Sladen could get no farther than Tengyueh, however, because of the disturbed state of the country as a result of the Panthay rebellion.[18]

Eventually Lord Salisbury yielded to the fears of British commercial interests that the French would entirely absorb the markets of Yunnan and neighboring provinces and sent an expedition to reopen British trade routes (1875). Colonel Horace Browne, accompanied by the geographer Ney Elias, who is remembered for his journey through Mongolia and his survey of the Yellow River, succeeded in getting farther than Manwyne, to Serai, where they learned that Augustus Margary, who had gone on ahead, had been murdered (1875).[19] Browne's party thereupon returned to Bhamo as the last official British attempt to open a direct route to interior China. As a matter of fact, the reports of Grosvenor, Baber, and Davenport, who were sent from Hankow to Yunnan in connection with the British demand for reparation over the Margary affair, convinced the home government that the topographic difficulties of the route from Bhamo to Yunnan and Szechwan were too great for practical railway construction.[20]

Government of India's Lack of Interest

British officials in Burma frequently complained of the impossibility of getting the government of India to give any attention to the northeastern frontier. That government was wholly occupied with the northwestern frontier and the danger of Russian aggression through Afghanistan and the Khyber Pass. As early as the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1816–1818 Dr. Francis Buchanan, of laterite fame,[21] had advised the East India Company against "giving the Chinese any just reason for suspicion by forming pretensions to any part of the mountainous region which separates the two Empires."[22] Lord Lawrence, the Viceroy, had advised against the Sladen expedition: "His Excellency can hardly conceive any step more imprudent than for British merchants to settle in Bhamo or a British official to be stationed there for any purpose."[23] In the short viceroyalty of Lord

[18] This disturbance hindered the British and aided the French. Captain Strover reported that during his first three years in Bhamo "not a single consignment belonging to British firms had reached Bhamo."

[19] The resultant British demand for compensation gave rise to the famed Chefoo Convention, a recent study of which is S. T. Wang: The Margary Affair and the Chefoo Agreement, New York, 1940.

[20] Particularly E. Colborne Baber: Travels and Researches in the Interior of China, *Royal Geogr. Soc. Suppl. Papers*, Vol. 1, 1882–1885, pp. 1–201, especially pp. 154–192, "Notes on the Route Followed by Mr. Grosvenor's Mission through Western Yünnan," reprinted from *Parliamentary Rept., China, No. 3 (1878)*.

[21] See this number of the *Geographical Review*, p. 177.

[22] Papers respecting the Nepaul War, London, 1824, p. 45.

[23] Letter from the government of India to Fytche, dated Simla, July 18, 1867, in Sladen, *op. cit.*, appendix T.

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Mayo the government of India, even at the risk of losing control over the trade routes to Yunnan, again stated its policy:[24] "The future annexation of Burma, or any of its adjacent states, is not an event which I . . . desire; . . . I should view with extreme regret . . . the necessity of occupation, or of assuming, even in a temporary manner, the government of any of the states lying adjacent to the province now in your charge." In short, the official attitude of the government of India has been summarized as follows: "The condition of the Northeastern frontier caused no Governor-General a single sleepless night."[25]

Railways Suggested

Meantime, British commercial interests continued to demand that the Indian government provide facilities for trade to western China in order to forestall any French plans to acquire prior advantages in Yunnan and Szechwan. The *Parliamentary Papers* alone contain nearly twenty reports on expeditions and proposals with respect to trans-Burma trade with western China and the upper Mekong from 1824 to 1900. The most persistent advocates of British penetration of Yunnan, Szechwan, and Kwangsi from the Bay of Bengal were Captain Richard Sprye and his son, who for half a century (1840–1890) presented numerous proposals for railways and highways into western Siam, to the Shan and Laos States, and to southern China.

Perhaps the best-publicized effort was that by Archibald R. Colquhoun, a deputy commissioner in British Burma, and Holt S. Hallett, a civil engineer. Colquhoun, who was ardently anti-French, resigned his office when the government of Burma refused him leave to survey a railway route from Moulmein to Szemao by way of Chiengmai in Siam. He became a special correspondent for the London *Times*, traveled overland from Canton to Bhamo, and wrote voluminously against French designs on Southeast Asia.[26] The Colquhoun-Hallett railway plan suffered from a general suspicion that it was merely a means for "taking the King of Siam by the hand and leading him into the great British Indian family."[27] Although Colquhoun's line is actually the shortest practicable route from the Bay of Bengal to Yunnanfu (Kunming), it passes through sparsely settled country that is everywhere malarial below 4000 feet. There is not today a railway line, caravan route, or highway, British or French or Siamese, that anywhere follows the Colquhoun-Hallett survey.

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[24] Fytche, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, pp. 124–125 (letter from Lord Mayo).

[25] D. G. E. Hall, edit.: The Dalhousie-Phayre Correspondence, 1852–1856, London, 1932, p. xv.

[26] A. R. Colquhoun: Across Chrysê, 2 vols., 2nd edit., London, 1883; A. R. Colquhoun and H. S. Hallett: Report on the Railway Connexion of Burmah and China, London, 1887. See also H. S. Hallett: A Thousand Miles on an Elephant in the Shan States, Edinburgh and London, 1890.

[27] Philippe Lehault: France et Angleterre en Asie, Paris, 1892, p. 562.

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British Annexation of Upper Burma

French intrigue in Upper Burma, with its consequent danger to British commercial interests, was the principal reason for the annexation of independent Burma, in 1886.[28] Jules Ferry had pledged repeatedly that no French arms should be supplied Burma through Tongking. But British suspicions were aroused upon the discovery that a Franco-Burmese agreement had been signed providing for the construction of a railway, the establishment of a Bank of Burma with French capital, control of the Burmese postal system, and establishment of a line of French steamers on the Irrawaddy.[29] The die was cast when the British learned of a secret agreement to supply arms from Tongking after the signing of the Franco-Burmese treaty of January 15, 1885.[30]

The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, sent a message to the senior official in Lower Burma: "If, however, the present proceedings should eventuate in any serious attempt [by the French] to forestall us in Upper Burma I should not hesitate to annex the country."[31] After the publication of a "remarkably indiscreet" report by M. de Lanessan on the progress of French activities in Burma,[32] the Secretary of State on November 11, 1886, wired the Viceroy: "Please instruct General Prendergast to advance on Mandalay at once."[33]

British occupation of Upper Burma was followed by expeditions into the various Shan States tributary to King Theebaw. In 1890 a British party under Sir George Scott reached Keng Tung. Meantime both the French and the Siamese had asserted claims to parts of the former Burmese possessions. During the Franco-Burmese negotiations of 1885 Burma purported to cede part of Kiang Hung across the Mekong to the French. The British, as heirs to Theebaw's dominions, claimed the area but later awarded Kiang Hung to China on condition that it should never be ceded to another power.[34] However, the Chinese almost immediately gave part of Kiang Hung to the French.

Further difficulty arose over the substate of Mong Hsing, a trans-Mekong territory ruled by a junior branch of the governing family of Keng Tung. In March, 1894, Mr. Stirling of the Burma

[28] The British were fully aware of Burmese and French plans, which were reported in detail to the government of India. The Blue Book "Correspondence Relating to Burmah since the Accession of King Theebaw, in October, 1878," has 266 pages of dispatches, C. 4614 in *Parliamentary Papers*, 1886.

[29] Comte A. Mahé de la Bourdonnais: Un français en Birmanie, Paris, 1891. pp. 295–306.

[30] C. 4614 (*op. cit.*, footnote 28), No. 105.

[31] Sir Alfred Lyall: Life of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, 2 vols., London, 1905; reference in Vol. 2, p. 118.

[32] J. L. de Lanessan: Rapport fait au nom de la commission chargée d'examiner le projet de loi portant approbation de la convention complémentaire de commerce, signée à Paris le 15 janvier 1885, entre la France et la Birmanie, Paris, 1885. Lanessan became an aggressive governor general of French Indochina (1891 to 1894).

[33] C. 4614 (*op. cit.*), No. 122.

[34] Sir Edward Hertslet: Hertslet's China Treaties, 3rd edit., revised by G. E. P. Hertslet, with the assistance of Edward Parkes, 2 vols., London, 1908; reference in Vol. 1, pp. 99–109.

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Commission visited Mong Hsing; and he was followed, on Christmas Day, 1894, by Sir George Scott and Mr. Wharry, Chinese Political Adviser to the government of Burma, in connection with the Anglo-French Mekong Commission. M. Pavie, the French commissioner, had sent the French flag to Mong Hsing before the arrival of the British party, and the sawbwa had hoisted the tricolor over his palace. Pavie, who reached Mong Hsing on New Year's Day, had intended to welcome Sir George Scott to French territory. However, Scott had the French flag lowered and ran up his own. For a few months the incident had all the possibilities of an Oriental Fashoda nearly five years before the famous incident on the Nile.[35] The London *Times* had columns about the Mong Hsing incident; and Pavie in private conversation with Scott doubted the validity of French claims to the bazaar town. On January 15, 1895, a telegraphic message from the Viceroy announced an agreement with France that set mid-channel of the Mekong as the boundary.[36] Thus Mong Hsing, which had flown the British flag and had had a British post office for a year, was acquired by France. Siam's claims were quieted by the Treaty of Chantabun, which transferred all Siamese rights east of the Mekong to France. The remainder of the subordinate state of Keng Cheng went first to Siam but was acquired by France in May, 1896. British interests with respect to the Mekong frontier suffered from frequent changes of policy: Lord Roseberry favored the buffer-state idea;[37] Lord Kimberley ordered the occupation of Mong Hsing; then Lord Salisbury, "without exception the worst Foreign Secretary we ever had for matters east of Suez,"[38] gave up the state to France. The French secured a strategic, natural frontier for their Indochinese holdings and had the "further gratification of having enlarged them beyond all expectation."[39]

Later Rivalries

Anglo-French rivalry continued in Yunnan along Burma's northern frontiers until well into the present century. Rival railway and mining claims were the most frequent causes of friction. Article XII of the Anglo-Chinese agreement of February 4, 1897, contemplated

[35] The Mong Hsing–Keng Cheng incident is treated definitively by Clarence Hendershot: The Conquest, Pacification, and Administration of the Shan States by the British, 1886–1897 (Diss., Ph.D., University of Chicago, 1936). The best French account is contained in "Mission [Auguste] Pavie Indo-Chine, 1879–1895: Géographie et Voyages," Vol. 5, Paris, 1902, pp. 264–284.

[36] "Livre Jaune: Affairs du Haute-Mekong et de Siam, 1893–1902." By Article IV of the declaration, the two governments agreed that all commercial and other advantages conceded in the two Chinese provinces of Yunnan and Szechwan either to France or to Great Britain by their respective conventions of March 1, 1894, and June 20, 1895, and future privileges should "be extended and rendered common to both powers."

[37] G. L. LaFuze: Great Britain, France, and the Siamese Question, 1885–1904 (Diss., Ph.D., Univ. of Illinois, 1935), discusses the various proposals for a buffer state.

[38] G. E. Mitton [Lady Scott], edit.: Scott of the Shan Hills, London, 1936, p. 166.

[39] *Ibid.*, p. 215.

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railway construction in Yunnan and provided for connection with Burmese lines.[40] No development, however, took place and the British abandoned their surveys beyond Bhamo and Lashio. The agreement between France and China of April 10, 1898, authorized the French to construct a railway from the Tongking frontier to Yunnanfu.[41] This was carried out, but the plans for carrying the line farther were discarded. Activities of French explorers and missionaries in Yunnan along the Burma frontier were watched closely; the British in Burma were only mildly enthusiastic about the explorations of Prince Henry of Orleans from the Mekong to Assam across the top of Burma in 1895. The British were careful to open consulates in Szemao (Es-mok) and other inland treaty ports of Yunnan and Kwangsi that had little trans-Burma trade.

Siam probably owed her independence to the desire of both her neighbors to have a buffer state between them, the British having decided that Burma was "too soft and pulpy" to serve in that capacity. As matters turned out, France got much the lion's share of territory shorn from Siam. There is not in Burma today any area that was for any length of time Siamese territory, a fact recognized by the present Thai minister to the United States, who issued a communiqué indicating that, in contrast with her present demands upon the French possessions, Thailand is entirely satisfied with her Burma frontier.[42]

British development of Singapore after 1819, introduction of steam navigation to the Orient, the opening of the Suez Canal and the American transcontinental railway in 1869 only heightened the rivalry for alternate short cuts to "the greatest market in the world." By 1882 French engineers had completed surveys of a proposed Kra canal; and on June 8, 1883, Ferdinand de Lesseps presented the completed plans to the King of Siam as "la route Français au Tonkin." That distinguished Frenchman spoke of Bangkok as "the beginning of the Menam route to Yunnan."[43]

By about 1910 the epic age of European imperialism had come to an end; and since that time there have been no considerable additions to the French and British empires east of the Red Sea. Yunnan and Kweichow, for which the rivalry was particularly acute, during the past decade were perhaps less subject to foreign influence than any other provinces of China proper. Lord Curzon (Viceroy of

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[40] J. V. A. MacMurray, edit.: Treaties and Agreements with and concerning China 1894–1919 (Publs. Carnegie Endowment for Internatl. Peace, Division of Internatl. Law, Washington), 2 vols., New York, 1921; reference in Vol. 1, pp. 96–97.

[41] *Ibid.*, Vol. 1, p. 124.

[42] *The New York Times*, Oct. 6, 1940. Britain took compensation in the Malay states of Kelantan, Trengganu, Kedah, and Perak, which had been under loose Siamese protection before their cession to Britain in 1909.

[43] La Bourdonnais, *op. cit.*, pp. 232–241 and 265–284, discusses French interest in a Kra canal and contains a copy of De Lesseps' report.

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India from 1898 to 1905), for whom frontiers and imperialism in the grand manner had great fascination, forced the Iman of Muscat to renounce the lease of a coaling site to France,[44] saw the Hague Court decide in Britain's favor in 1905 the question of the grant of the French flag to Muscat dhows, carried on an intimate correspondence with King Chualalongkorn of Siam, and considered that country an outpost of the British Empire.[45] From the Olympian heights of Simla Lord Curzon took pride in Britannia's supremacy in Southeast Asia. The Indian Ocean was a British preserve: "At no point in the long stretches of British territory washed by its surf has the flag of any European rival ever been hoisted since the French colours were struck over Cuddalore in 1783."[46] Curzon dreamed of a grand trunk railway from Calais to Shanghai by way of British India and sent Major Davies to do the necessary survey work in Yunnan.[47] He believed mistakenly that India and China, the two most populous countries in the world, would in his time be joined by steel rails.

The great delusion that the Irrawaddy, the Salween, the Menam, or the Mekong would provide the entrepôt to interior China was the key to Anglo-French policy and rivalry in Southeast Asia for a century. The delusion died hard. Eventually, however, "loath as most Englishmen are to admit it," trade decided that none of these river valleys provided an economical entrance to China.[48] Likewise, it was at length realized that Indochina was not the path of empire. Both Britishers and Frenchmen, learning lessons from geography and history, agreed with Sir Henry Yule: At no time has a conqueror from India or Burma passed on to China, nor (with one minor exception) from China to India or Burma; nor did the conquests of any one of the great warriors of medieval Asia embrace any part of both countries.[49]

But the delusion was so persistent and complete that it amounted to a perfect case of mistaken identity. Meantime, "England annexed areas where she had interests to protect, France annexed areas where she *wished* to have interests to protect."[50]

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[44] Lovat Fraser: India under Curzon and After, New York, 1911, pp. 86–91, gives a convenient summary of French attempts to secure a base at the mouth of the Persian Gulf.

[45] Curzon wrote a brilliant defense of Britain's record in Siam (G. N. Curzon: The Siamese Boundary Question, *The Nineteenth Century*, Vol. 34, 1893, pp. 34–55).

[46] G. A. Ballard: Rulers of the Indian Ocean, London, 1927, p. 287.

[47] H. R. Davies: Yün-nan: The Link between India and the Yangtze, Cambridge, 1909. Davies urged construction, for political reasons, of a meter-gauge line from Burma to China at a cost of £20,000,000.

[48] Clifford (quoting Colborne Baber), *op. cit.*, p. 294. A governor general of French Indochina came to the same conclusion. "French Indochina cannot be considered as a country of commercial transit. Saigon can never compete with Singapore" (J. L. de Lanessan: L'Indo-Chine Française, Paris, 1889, p. 478).

[49] Yule's introduction to William Gill: The River of Golden Sand, 2 vols., London, 1880

[50] E. V. G. Kiernan: British Diplomacy in China, 1880–1885, London, 1939, p. 187.